

## From the Editor

When this month's cover photo of 1LT Thomas E. White on patrol with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam was taken in 1969, White didn't know two things: that he would become the 18th secretary of the Army and what his headgear would come to represent.

The new secretary leads our Army as it passes through a critical phase of transformation — from the conceptual to the actual. When soldiers donned the black beret on the Army's birthday, it symbolized the end of talking about transformation and the beginning of living it.

In her exclusive profile of White, *Soldiers'* award-winning journalist Beth Reece introduces us to the only Regular Army general officer to become the secretary of the Army. She reveals the soldier behind the suit and gives us a glimpse of what's ahead.

As a fifth-generation Texan, I grew up in an environment with no shortage of colorful euphemisms. The cover of this issue of *Hot Topics* on risk management reminds me of one such saying: be careful or you'll wake up dead — truly words to live by.

*John C. Suttle*

## Black Berets

I AM with the 40th Military Police Detachment at Fort Sill, Okla. Can we wear the military police regimental crest on our berets? I'm hoping our crest falls under the distinctive unit insignia category.

*Name Withheld by Request via e-mail*

MSG Kittie L. Messman, the DCSPER uniform specialist, responds: "Regimental distinctive insignia is not authorized for wear on the beret flash; only the distinctive unit insignia (unit crest) is authorized for wear. Therefore, whatever DUI you currently wear on the garrison cap and on the epaulets of your Class A coat will be worn on the flash. For more information, visit our uniform Web page at: [www.odcspcr.army.mil/default.asp?pageid=69f](http://www.odcspcr.army.mil/default.asp?pageid=69f)."

I WAS reading the May "Hot Topics" pullout, trying to learn more about the standards for the beret, having never worn one before, and noticed something that I need more clarification on.

On page 5, one of the questions reads: "When wearing the beret with the Class A and B uniforms, do soldiers blouse their trousers and wear boots?" The answer given was: "Only military police and soldiers assigned to air-assault coded positions or ranger, airborne and special forces units may blouse their trousers with boots." Can you please clarify what you mean by air-assault coded positions?

Thanks and keep up the good work.

*Ssg Douglas R. Krause  
Iowa Army National Guard  
via e-mail*

MSG Kittie Messman explains: Certain soldiers are in positions

## Awesome Photo

SFC Brenda Benner's picture, on page 4 in the June issue of *Soldiers*, of paratroops jumping from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter would make an AWESOME pop-out poster for your magazine! If not, can you send me the picture electronically so I can take it to a printer to make a poster? Airborne!



*Mike Sparks  
via e-mail*

YOUR request has been forwarded to the Electronic Imaging Branch for processing.

## PS: Yes; Pinups: No

WALKING through the Pentagon recently, I chanced upon the rack at the end of Corridor 6 where copies of *Soldiers* are available to anyone passing by. I picked up copies of the May and June issues, the first I've read in several years. It was good to see what you've done with the magazine since the last time I was a regular reader.

I especially liked the 50th anniversary look back at PS magazine ("PS: Happy Birthday") in the June edition and the 55-year retrospective on *Soldiers* ("A Story of Change") in the May issue. Both magazines are treasured memories of my time in the Army.

One small complaint, however. The story on PS was forthright in discussing Connie Rodd's transformation from pinup-styled siren to professional civilian adviser to the Army's maintenance workforce. The story on *Soldiers* (and its predecessor, *Army Digest*), is a lot less candid about one of its favorite features of times long gone, the pinup.

The inside back cover used to be the first page most GIs turned to when a new issue of *Army Digest* hit the street. While it was more than appropriate to discontinue the pinup in the early '70s, it does seem sad that it didn't even merit a mention in a story about the magazine's proud history.

*COL James H. Kurtz (Ret.)  
Fairfax, Va.*

WHILE the main story did not elaborate on the pinup's demise, the timeline on page 41 noted that the last pinup appeared in the March 1980 issue of *Soldiers*.

coded air assault, although the units themselves are not air assault.

I ONCE wore the black beret for

a short period of time — in the late '70s, when I first entered the Army. I'm not sure when it was first worn, but the black beret was worn by both armor

and cavalry soldiers. Unfortunately, in 1979 we were told to put OUR black berets to rest. I don't recall a great deal of sniveling coming from the ranks of armor or cavalry units. Just curious as to why the rangers felt they needed to be exclusive and be the only ones to wear it.

SFC J.D. Callahan  
via e-mail

## Army Linguists

YOUR May photos of the eager young linguists in training brought back a lot of memories. I went through the DLI Arabic Basic Course prior to my actual 98G MOS training at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas.

Ironically, back in my day, in 1989 — despite there having been eight years of fighting between Iran and Iraq — it was not until just prior to shipping off for Operation Desert Shield that

I ever had even a fleeting exposure to Iraqi dialect. We all more or less had to become experts overnight, but for the most part the signals intelligence collected during the Gulf War was gleaned by native speakers culled from other MOSs and pressed into 98G slots.

During the Gulf War I mainly served as a translator for U.S. commanders whenever we needed to coordinate anything with our Arabic-speaking coalition partners, but I also helped process a busload of Iraqi POWs once my unit got into Kuwait City. The high point of my time in Saudi Arabia, however, was helping the special forces teams conduct MOUT training with Kuwaitis at King Khalid Military City.

Of course once the Desert Storm cease-fire was declared I, like most military linguists, returned once again to my pre-war duties — few of which had

anything to do with my MOS or language proficiency maintenance. Is it any wonder then why linguist retention remains a weak point for the army?

Name Withheld by Request  
via e-mail

## Brady Photo

YOUR Matthew Brady photo on the inside back page of the May issue is, I believe, miscaptioned. That waterfront is Yorktown, Va., on the York River. Supplies amassed from McClellan's Fort Monroe were to be shipped to Richmond by way of West Point, Va. The Confederates evacuated Yorktown in 1862, and the Union forces moved in.

The house and barn in the photo are those of William

Rogers. The warehouses in the distance were for tobacco storage, and ground Indian corn, until ships arrived for return to Europe in an earlier century. It was earlier than 1864, I believe. The Brady team shot a lot of photos in Yorktown. Let me know please if it is otherwise. A couple of books are wrong if so.

Dick Ivy  
via e-mail

WHILE our error was innocent, in that the photo we received was captioned "City Point" and included "U.S. Army photo" and a file number (SC 320494), it appears you are right. A similar photo and bibliographic text on the Internet seem to confirm your information. Thank you for the correction.

**Soldiers** is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: **Feedback, Soldiers, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581**, or e-mail: [soldiers@belvoir.army.mil](mailto:soldiers@belvoir.army.mil).



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